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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 001138

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TAGS: [ENRG](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [CH](#) [JA](#)
SUBJECT: NO JOY IN ARRANGING HU VISIT TO JAPAN

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Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Chinese President Hu Jintao's May visit to Japan was intended to be a foreign policy success showcasing Japan's improved ties with China, but instead has become riddled with problems, including Tibet and the incident of contaminated Chinese dumplings imported to Japan, MOFA China Division Director told Embassy Tokyo political officer on April 22. Canceling the visit, however, would deal a significant political blow to the Fukuda administration, he stated. The dispute over the gas fields in the East China Sea is unlikely to be resolved before Hu visits, but Japan is hoping to come up with a "scheme" or "partial solution" to announce. This partial solution will not include "true joint development," however. Japan and China are still aiming to issue a very short joint communiqué, but negotiations over the text-and on whether to include language on Taiwan-is slow going and will likely continue until the eve of Hu's visit, Akiba relayed. End Summary.

Fukuda Remains a Friend to China

12. (C) Prime Minister Fukuda is trying to downplay the tension in Japan's relationship with China and is working to "keep things quiet as a friend to China," even if it negatively affects his public approval support rate, Akiba stated. Fukuda's personal relationship with senior Chinese officials has played an important role in continuing the warming trend in bilateral ties. When Fukuda visited China, Hu walked 30 or so meters to greet him in the cold, without even wearing a jacket. Fukuda is willing to do what he thinks is in Japan's best interests when it comes to China, even if his goals do not mesh with public opinion, Akiba said.

Aftermath of "Gyoza Gate" Continues

13. (C) The Japanese public is not ready to regard China as a superpower and the public "loves to see China bashed in the press," Akiba continued. Media coverage criticizing China on the dumpling (gyoza) poisoning case received front-page coverage in Japan for over two weeks. Foreign Minister Koumura and Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura told visiting Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi that Japan was confident the dumplings were contaminated in China, but Beijing continues to insist it happened in Japan, Akiba said.

Japanese government officials have repeatedly told Beijing that China needs to improve food safety, he added.

East China Sea

14. (C) The dispute over territorial claims in the East China Sea will not be solved anytime soon, but Japan and China are continuing efforts to manage the dispute and "move it to the back burner," Akiba stated. Reaching agreement on an area for joint development, without prejudice to respective legal positions on territorial claims, will be realized "in the near future." It is possible this important step forward will not occur before Hu's visit, however and both sides are trying to delink progress on the East China Sea with Hu's May visit, he added. (Note: Akiba is one of the negotiators for the Japanese side on the East China Sea issue, and he noted he would probably be traveling to Beijing to continue the negotiations before Hu's visit. MOFA had invited the Chinese side to come to Tokyo, but the Chinese officials were reluctant to travel to Japan right before Hu's visit. End Note.)

Taiwan Remains Sticking Point on Possible Joint Communiqué

15. (C) China is continuing to push for text on Japan's stance on Taiwan in the joint communiqué to be unveiled during Hu's visit, Akiba said. The joint communiqué will be very short and will focus on environmental and energy cooperation. Japan and China will also release a separate "fact sheet" outlining bilateral ties. The joint communiqué will mention the East China Sea and will stress bilateral environment and energy cooperation, but will likely sound "too abstract" to garner increased public support rates for Fukuda, he explained. China is continuing to insist that Japan include

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text on Taiwan - "a core interest for Beijing" -- and Japan has insisted back that obtaining a permanent UNSC seat is a core interest for Japan. If Japan does decide to include language on Taiwan, it will be no more than one sentence, and will not contain any nuanced changes, Akiba emphasized.

16. (C) When asked about the long-term outlook for Japan's role vis--vis China in Asia, Akiba painted a very pessimistic future. Japan has given up on being number one, he stated. China has a bigger population, more land, and will soon have a larger GNP. Meanwhile, Japan's population is shrinking. The Japanese government is worried about the security of Japan since China has mid-range missiles. Growing Chinese military strength makes Japan's alliance with the United States even more important to Japan's security. The Japanese public ignores the military threat from China, he stated. There is no progress on Japan's military cooperation with China, but the recent dialogue on security matters is "better than nothing," he added.

17. (C) Bio Note: Akiba stated that he was not a "China expert" by background and said it had been almost two years since he became the director for the China Division. He noted that serving as director had "worn him out" and he was exhausted. He said he requested to be transferred to a different position this summer and was looking forward to moving on.
SCHIEFFER